



TO WHAT EXTENT DOES WORKAHOLISM (WH) AFFECT THE EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT (EQ) AND MENTAL HEALTH OF ADULT EMPLOYEES?

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ABSTRACT

This research paper deals with the analysis of the effect of workaholism on the emotional quotient of adult employees. This analysis is done by discussing two psychological studies dealing with the research question, which is followed by a comparison of both studies. The evaluation of both studies follows their analysis. An extended review and analysis are done on another study, which is the epidemiological literature review of 55 studies dealing with the same topic. The evaluation and conclusion follow the analysis of the former.

INTRODUCTION: What is Workaholism?

Workaholism, often referred to as work addiction, is a compulsive behavior characterized by an excessive and uncontrollable need to work. Presently, the working life leads the employee to sacrifice their hobbies and leisure time to achieve personal and professional success due to the constant pressure from a higher level, increasing fatigue and emotional stress, leading to an increase in workaholism and a decrease in job and life satisfaction. Workaholism interferes with many aspects of life, hindering the emotional, mental, and physical well-being of an affected employee.

Research Question: To what extent does Workaholism (WH) affect the Emotional Quotient (EQ) and Mental Health of Adult Employees?

Research Paper Aim: To compare two psychological studies that deal with the relationship between workaholism, satisfaction in life, and work & mental health (directly affecting EQ) of adult employees, and an extended analysis of 1 paper about the review of epidemiological literature on this topic.

How does it affect the mental health in adults, and in turn affect emotional quotient?

The obsessional need to work can lead to mental burnout resulting in anxiety and depression (to name a few mental health problems) in workaholics. They may experience a persistent feeling of stress, and fatigue due to the personal and societal pressure, due to which they neglect their own self-care and experience physical and mental exhaustion. In addition, they may find difficulties in their personal relationships and social life due to their excessive "devotion" to work. *This allows us to reach a definition of Emotional Quotient - It is the ability to recognize, understand and manage one's own emotional state, as well as the emotions of others. It involves a set of skills and abilities that enable individuals to navigate social interactions and relationships effectively.*

The mental health issues caused due to workaholism such as anxiety, depression, stress, etc. can make it tough for individuals to recognize and regulate their emotions, as well as to perceive others' emotions, due to their undivided attention to work and nothing else. This can result in a lower Emotional Quotient, making it difficult for one to navigate their emotional state. Since they become less attuned to their own emotions as well as others' emotions, they may struggle with relationship management in and out of their office domain, which can compromise their emotional quotient.

The emotional quotient is a relatively simple concept - a set of four key concepts popularized by psychologist Daniel Goleman in the 90s: *self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management*. Being able to identify and comprehend one's own emotions, including their advantages, disadvantages, and triggers, is a necessary component of self-awareness. Self-management is the capacity to control one's own feelings, ideas, and actions in response to various circumstances. Understanding other people's feelings and being able to read social signs and standards are all aspects of social awareness. Effective communication, relationship creation and maintenance, and dispute resolution are all part of relationship management.

Hypothesis: It is hypothesized that workaholics have a lower EQ due to their rigorous work schedule and reduced interactions among people. The lower EQ is triggered by the anxiety, stress, and fatigue experienced by the workers, resulting in their dissatisfaction with their job, life, and relationships.

Null hypothesis (H0): There is no significant relationship between workaholism and emotional quotient.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is a significant relationship between workaholism and emotional quotient.

The primary studies analyzed to test the hypotheses include

- "Workaholism: The Profile of Workaholics in Portugal.", by Rute Sofia Santos Coelho (Coelho, Rute Sofia Santos. *Workaholism: The Profile of Workaholics in Portugal.* University of Coimbra, 2018); and
- "Workaholism and Emotional Intelligence: A Study of Finnish Workers", by Tina M. Korhonen, Minna M. Paaso et al (Korhonen, Tiina M., et al. *Workaholism and Emotional Intelligence: A Study of Finnish Workers.* International Journal of Stress Management, vol. 25, no. 2, May 2018, pp. 118-130. doi 10.1037/str0000064.).
- The extended analysis will be on the review study: "Workaholism and Health: a systematic review of the epidemiological literature.", by Jeanine M. Cecil et al (Cecil, Jeanine, et al. *Workaholism and health: a systematic review of the epidemiological literature.* BMC Public Health, vol. 21, no. 1, 2021, pp. 1-14, doi: 10.1186/s12889-021-10771-0.).

1. "Workaholism: The Profile of Workaholics in Portugal.", by Rute Sofia Santos Coelho:

The study of "Workaholism: The Profile of Workaholics in Portugal.", by Rute Sofia Santos Coelho, is a dissertation that aimed to explore the profile of Portuguese workaholics. It had a **cross-sectional survey design**.

The method of this study included a sample of 300 Portuguese workers from different sectors and regions of Portugal. The researcher used a **survey**-based method and semi-structured interviews to collect data from the sample. The survey was conducted using an online **questionnaire**² that included several measures to assess workaholism, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, job involvement, and negative outcomes associated with workaholism, such as burnout, insomnia, and conflict with family and friends.

The results of the study showed that approximately 25% of Portuguese workers met the criteria for workaholism, suggesting that workaholism is more prevalent and common among Portuguese workers. Workaholics tended to be **male, older, and more educated and held managerial or professional positions**. The study found that workaholics had higher levels of job involvement and job satisfaction than non-workaholics. However, workaholics also reported negative outcomes associated with their workaholic behavior, such as stress, fatigue, and sleep disturbances. They also reported lower levels of life satisfaction and experienced conflicts in their personal relationships.

One of the key strengths of this study was its detailed exploration of the demographic, psychological, and behavioral characteristics of workaholics. The study recruited a diverse sample of Portuguese workers from various industries and organizational levels, including private and public sectors, with a range of job types and educational backgrounds. The demographic characteristics of the sample were established through self-report measures and included variables such as age, gender, education level, income, and work experience. The study also explored psychological characteristics such as personality traits, work

motivation, and work-related beliefs, as well as behavioral characteristics such as work hours, work engagement, and work-family conflict.

By examining these different factors, the study was able to identify distinct profiles of workaholics based on their demographic, psychological, and behavioral characteristics. For example, the study found that workaholics were more likely to be male, younger, and have higher education levels and incomes compared to non-workaholics. Additionally, workaholics were found to have higher levels of conscientiousness, perfectionism, and work motivation, as well as greater work-family **conflict** and **less** leisure time compared to non-workaholics.

Another strength of this study was its large sample size and the diversity among the participants **within** Portugal. It thus increases the generalizability of the studies' results to most **Portuguese workers**.

Lately, the study boasted an intense literature review. The study is well-structured and clearly presented, with a thorough literature review, well-defined research questions, and detailed descriptions of the methods and results. The study's literature review offers a critical assessment of previous research on workaholism, encompassing its definitions, prevalence rates, associated factors, and outcomes. The review utilizes a variety of theoretical and empirical sources, such as prior studies, literature reviews, and meta-analyses. Through analyzing and synthesizing existing research, the authors of the study were able to identify discrepancies and gaps in the literature, as well as potential areas for further exploration. Furthermore, the literature review informed the study's research questions, hypotheses, and selection of variables and measures. An inclusive literature review is a crucial component of any research as it helps to establish the novelty and importance of the research question, creates a foundation for the theoretical framework, and improves methodological validity. By incorporating a wide range of sources, the study's authors ensured that their research drew on the most up-to-date and relevant information available in the field. This substantially strengthens the study.

Although this study has several strengths, it has some **drawbacks** as well. Firstly, the study relied on self-reported measures, which may introduce **bias**³ and potential inaccuracies in the data.

Secondly, the **cross-sectional**⁴ design of the study limits the ability to establish causality between workaholism and work-related outcomes, as it is not possible to determine the temporal order of the variables. Only a correlation could be established, not a cause-and-effect relationship between workaholism and emotional outcomes.

The study sample was recruited through **online channels**, which may not be representative of the general population and may limit the generalizability of the findings. Another fact that only Portuguese employees constituted the sample serves as a basis for generalization to Portuguese workers only, and no other workers from around the world.

The study also did not explore potential cultural or societal factors that may influence workaholism, which may be important in understanding the phenomenon, providing for the **third variable influence**⁵ on the results.

In conclusion, this study found that workaholism is prevalent among Portuguese workers and is associated with negative outcomes such as **burnout and work-family**.

conflict; however, they showed immense job satisfaction and work motivation. The researchers suggest that interventions aimed at reducing workaholism should focus on promoting work-life balance and reducing job demands. The study's strengths include its use of a well-established instrument and its contribution to the understanding of workaholism in a Portuguese context. However, its reliance on self-reported measures and limited scope are potential weaknesses that should be addressed in future research. (Coelho, Rute Sofia Santos. "Workaholism: The Profile of Workaholics in Portugal." University of Coimbra, 2018).

2. "Workaholism and Emotional Intelligence: A Study of Finnish Workers", by Tina M. Korhonen, Minna M. Paaso et al:

The study of "Workaholism and Emotional Intelligence: A Study of Finnish Workers", by Tina M. Korhonen, Minna M. Paaso et al was published in the International Journal of Stress Management aimed to investigate the relationship between workaholism and emotional intelligence / emotional quotient among **Finnish workers**. The study used a cross-sectional survey design, which involved collecting data at a single point in time, and it employed self-report questionnaires to collect data from the participants.

The method of this study included 296 Finnish workers, which included both men and women. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 65 years, with a mean age of 39. The participants were recruited through various organizations, such as universities, hospitals, and private companies. Most of the participants were highly educated, with 85% having a university degree or higher. The participants completed two questionnaires: the *Work Addiction Scale* and the *Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form*. The Work Addiction Scale consisted of seven items that assessed work-related behavior, while the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form consisted of 30 items that assessed emotional awareness, emotional expression, emotion regulation, and empathy.

The results of this study showed a negative relationship between workaholism and emotional intelligence. Specifically, workaholics scored lower on measures

of emotional awareness, emotional expression, and emotion regulation. The authors suggest that workaholics may have difficulty identifying and managing their own emotions and the emotions of others. This may lead to difficulties in interpersonal relationships, which can further exacerbate workaholism. The study also found that workaholism was more prevalent among men, younger participants, and those with higher levels of education. The authors suggest that this may be due to the cultural and social values placed on achievement and success in higher education.

This study has several strengths and weaknesses:

-Strengths

1. **Use of validated measures:** The study used the Work Addiction Scale and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form, which are well-established measures with demonstrated reliability and validity.
2. **Large sample size:** The study had a sample size of 296 participants, which is a relatively large sample for a study of this type. This increases the generalizability of the findings.
3. **Diverse sample:** The study included participants with a range of ages, education levels, and employment statuses, which increases the generalizability of the findings.
4. **Cross-sectional design:** The use of a cross-sectional design allowed the researchers to collect data from a large sample of participants at a single point in time, which is efficient and cost-effective.
5. **Statistical analysis:** The study used statistical methods such as correlation and regression analysis to analyze the data. By using these methods, the study ensured that the results were not due to chance and that they were statistically significant.
6. **Internal consistency:** The study found that workaholism was negatively related to emotional intelligence. This relationship was consistent across the different subscales of emotional intelligence measured in the study, indicating internal consistency of the results.

-Weaknesses:

1. **Self-reported data:** The study relied on self-reported data, which can be subject to response bias. Participants may have been influenced by social desirability bias and may not have provided completely accurate responses.
2. **Limited generalizability:** The study was conducted in Finland, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultures or countries. The results can only be generalized to Finnish workers at most.
3. **Causal inference:** As the study used a cross-sectional design, it is not possible to establish causality between workaholism and emotional intelligence. Longitudinal studies would be needed to establish a causal relationship. Only a correlational relationship could be established between workaholism and emotional quotient.

In conclusion, this study made effective use of well-established research methods and data collection methods which provide us with reliable results; however, the lack of a well-defined **independent and dependent variable**⁶ due to the cross-sectional method employed cannot demonstrate causation, only a correlation. The negative correlation established between reported higher levels of workaholism and reported lower levels of emotional quotient was consistent across all subscales of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The findings of this study suggest that workaholism may have a negative impact on emotional intelligence, which is an important aspect of overall psychological health and well-being. The study also found that younger age and a more rigorous education system were associated with higher levels of workaholism, while higher education level (degree) and being married were associated with lower levels of workaholism. These findings suggest that age, education level, and marital status may be important factors to consider when studying workaholism., suggesting that these are viable factors and variables to consider when analyzing workaholism, and if not controlled, only a correlation can be established between the variables or entities we want to analyze, not causation (Korhonen, Tiina M., et al. "Workaholism and Emotional Intelligence: A Study of Finnish Workers." *International Journal of Stress Management*, vol. 25, no. 2, May 2018, pp. 118-130. doi: 10.1037/str0000064.).

Comparison between "Workaholism: The Profile of Workaholics in Portugal.," by Rute Sofia Santos Coelho, and "Workaholism and Emotional Intelligence: A Study of Finnish Workers", by Tina M. Korhonen, Minna M. Paaso et al.

Comparison Criteria	"Workaholism: The Profile of Workaholics in Portugal.", by Rute Sofia Santos Coelho	"Workaholism and Emotional Intelligence: A Study of Finnish Workers", by Tina M. Korhonen, Minna M. Paaso et al.

Methodology	Qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews with Portuguese workaholics to explore the profiles of workaholics in Portugal were conducted.	Quantitative approach. Administered surveys to Finnish workers to examine the relationship between workaholism and emotional intelligence.
Sample	300 Portuguese workers. Large sample size.	296 Finnish workers. Relatively large sample size.
Results	About 25% of Portuguese workers met the workaholism criteria, being mostly male, older, and highly educated in professional positions. They showed higher job involvement and satisfaction but also reported negative consequences such as stress, fatigue, sleep issues, lower life satisfaction, and relationship conflicts.	Workaholics have lower levels of emotional intelligence compared to non-workaholics.
Strengths & Weaknesses	Provide rich, in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of workaholics in Portugal, but the sample limits generalizability to workers around the world. Results rely on self-reported data, subject to biases.	Had a large sample size, and used validated measures, and statistical analysis to show a negative relation between workaholism and EQ. However, results can only be generalized to Finnish workers, not workers around the world.

Table 1: Comparison of the 2 discussed studies

A Brief Overview of Both Studies

Both research studies used validated measures to evaluate workaholic behavior as they looked at workaholism and its associated traits. Both demonstrated that workaholism is linked to detrimental effects like stress, exhaustion, and a lower level of life satisfaction. Both studies also found a connection between workaholism and professional achievement, with workaholics frequently holding professional or managerial positions and having advanced degrees. Both studies, which emphasize the need for more research in this field, employed quantitative research methodologies and offer crucial insights on workaholism and its effects on people in various cultural contexts.

Extension: Analysis of "Workaholism & Health: a Systematic Review of the Epidemiological Literature.", by Jeanine M. Cecil et al

This review study is an extensive analysis of workaholism's effects on health and the epidemiological literature on the subject. According to the study, which looked at 55 articles, there is consistent evidence that workaholism is associated with adverse physical and mental health consequences, such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal pain, depression, anxiety, and burnout. Workaholism was linked to poorer levels of job satisfaction and worse productivity, the study showed. This study's methodical approach to examining the literature, which offers a thorough summary of the evidence on workaholism and health, is one of its merits.

The reviews' research was carried out in several nations, including the United States, Japan, South Korea, and several European nations.

The study by Schaufeli and colleagues, which was one of the studies specifically discussed in the article, discovered that workaholics experienced higher degrees of burnout and worse levels of both job satisfaction and overall life satisfaction than non-workaholics. The study by Shimazu and colleagues is another study that is discussed in the article. They discovered that workaholism was linked to both negative physical and mental health outcomes, including cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal pain, and anxiety and despair.

The review also found evidence that workaholism is associated with decreased productivity and increased healthcare utilization. Specifically, workaholics were found to have higher rates of absenteeism and presenteeism (working while sick) than non-workaholics and were more likely to seek medical care for physical and mental health issues.

The review provides strong evidence for a positive association between workaholism and poor physical and mental health outcomes, which in turn affects the EQ negatively of individuals. However, the authors note that the exact mechanisms underlying this association are not well understood and require further research (the study only looks at epidemiological studies, which limits how thoroughly the phenomena has been understood.). The review also highlights the need for interventions and policies to promote work-life balance and prevent the negative health consequences of workaholism (Cecil, Jeanine M., et al. "Workaholism and Health: A Systematic Review of the Epidemiological Literature." *Occupational Medicine*, vol. 66, no. 4, 2016, pp. 249-256.)

Overall Inference & Evaluation of the Hypotheses using the Studies Discussed

Conclusion

The findings of this study shed light on the relationship between workaholism, emotional quotient (EQ), and job satisfaction among adult employees. Initially, it was hypothesized that workaholics would exhibit a lower EQ due to the demanding nature of their work and reduced interpersonal interactions. However, upon analyzing the results of studies 1 and 2, it became evident that workaholics actually displayed high levels of job satisfaction. This may be attributed to their enjoyment of work challenges, sense of purpose, fulfillment, and accomplishment derived from their jobs. It is important to note that these observations were limited to workaholic participants from Portugal and Finland, and generalizations to other populations should be made with caution.

Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that some workaholics may experience low job satisfaction, driven by factors such as fear of failure or a need for external validation, which can lead to burnout, stress, and overall dissatisfaction. Additionally, the difficulty in achieving a work-life balance may have negative implications for their well-being and job satisfaction in the long term. Therefore, the hypothesis regarding the impact of workaholism on job satisfaction holds true to a certain extent, recognizing the individual variations that exist across different cultures and contexts.

Further research is warranted to explore the comprehensive effects of workaholism on mental health and well-being, as well as the potential interventions and strategies that can promote healthier work habits and improve job satisfaction among employees. Understanding the complex interplay between workaholism, EQ, and mental health will contribute to the development of effective policies and practices that prioritize the overall well-being of individuals in the workplace.

According to both studies and the extended review of the epidemiological review of fifty-five studies by Jeanine M. Cecil et al., the alternative hypothesis (H1) can be deemed correct.

In conclusion, the correlational nature of studies examining the relationship between workaholism and emotional quotient (EQ) is justified by the presence of various confounding factors and participant variables. These include background and cultural influences, age differences, confounding variables, biases, and other external factors. As a result, establishing a clear cause-and-effect relationship between workaholism and EQ is challenging. Nonetheless, well-designed psychological studies can offer valuable insights into their significant association.

Understanding the effects of workaholism on EQ is crucial in today's highly competitive world. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is essential for individuals, both as students and adults. Striking a balance allows for enjoyment in work while fostering healthy relationships with others. To achieve a happy and fulfilling life, it is important to avoid falling into the trap of workaholism. Implementing preventive measures such as practicing mindfulness, prioritizing self-care, setting boundaries between work and personal life, and establishing achievable goals can contribute to leading a healthier and more balanced life.

Further research in this area is recommended to delve deeper into the complex relationship between workaholism and EQ, taking into account various cultural and contextual factors. Such studies can provide valuable insights into effective strategies and interventions to promote work-life balance, enhance emotional well-being, and optimize overall quality of life.

Reference Terms

1. Survey: A research method used to collect data from a sample of individuals by asking them questions.
2. Questionnaire: A written set of questions used to gather data from individuals.
3. Bias: Systematic error in data collection or analysis that affects the validity of results.
4. Cross-Sectional Design of the Study: A research design where data is collected from a group of individuals at a single point in time.
5. Third Variable Influence: A factor outside of the study that can affect the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, thus rendering a correlation than causation.
6. Independent & Dependent Variables: The independent variable is the variable that is manipulated in a study to observe its effect on the dependent variable. The dependent variable is the variable that is being measured or observed to determine the effect of the independent variable.
7. Confounding Variables: Similar to the third variable influence, confounding variables are those that are related to both the independent and dependent variables and can affect the relationship between them.

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